

VSC Executive Committee Minutes, February 11, 2020

Attendees: Christine Johnson, Steven High, Erin Duggan, Virginia Haley

Attending by telephone: Nick Mavrikis

Excused absence: Lorrie Liang

Virginia Haley provided an update on her communications regarding the VSC proposals on obtaining promotional values from Mote on the Aquarium project in light of the signal that all 5 Commissioners are going to vote to support Mote. Virginia also shared the news that the Manatee County TDC declined to support Mote's request for \$5 million and instead is recommending \$50,000 per year in marketing support.

The committee discussed a potential of pursuing an autism-friendly designation for the major tourism assets of the destination. There are a number of organizations that provide training that can lead to autism friendly designations or more rigorous (and expensive) certification trainings. It was agreed that Virginia will provide the Board with a summary and if the Board is interested in pursuing, next step would be to introduce the concept to some of the attractions and key tourism restaurants. Ringling Museum is a good example of an autism friendly attraction and their program was developed with Easter Seals.

The Committee reviewed the VSC internal communications plans which has been updated with the Board's advocacy discussions. Next steps will be in developing an info-graphic to explain the work of VSC follow by videos. Different tactics will be used, depending on the audience. Chair Johnson suggested that for the Board meeting, story telling is the most effective. It was suggested that each Board meeting begin with a "mission moment" in 2-3 minutes describing a VSC "win" from the previous month.

The Committee discussed the COBA recommendations on involving the business community as Sarasota County considers putting a mental health tax referendum on the ballot for November 2020. Sarasota County government has developed a survey regarding the topic and it was agreed the survey needs to be shared with VSC partners to get their input.